THE

CHARACTER

OR

EAR-MARK

OF

Mr. *WILLIAM PRYNNE*
Bencher of *Lincolnes Inne*, and Author of a great many late ſcandalous Paſquils.

In which are contain'd many ſeaſonable, and Wholſome Exhortations to the ſame.

Rode caper vitem, tamen hinc, cum ſtabis ad aras.
In tua quod fundi cornua poſſit, erit.
—— *Riſum teneatis Amici?*

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A CHARACTER OR EAR-MARK OF Mr. *WILLIAM PRYNNE.*

IT Was once a saying of the famous *Aristotle*, that for a man to be afflicted, it was *Humanum* for an *ingenious* man to be derided, twas *Turpissimum:* And upon that good Rule Mr. *Prynne* had spared me the labour of a studied derision if he had once shewed himself *ingenious* in any thing save the *Confession* of his own shame, which truly he has plentifully done very lately in a great number of peevish and most unadvised Pamphlets, A *Man*, (one would think) that might have learn'd the Consequence of seditious Scribling, long e're this time, if his guilt had taken half so deep an *Impression* upon his *heart*, as his punishment hath left on his *Head:* But his violent humour is now (as it seems) grown incorrigible; he proclaims open hostility against all this side of the terrestrial *Globe*, and appeares like an inhabitant of the *Antipodes*, point blank against all men.

Ther's a Martial Law amongst School-boyes, that after the first blow given by one of the Combatants, the other may fall on, & defend himself, though his standing on his own guard cost his adversary a Bloudy Nose, or a Black Eye. This Gentleman is the first that hath bidden defiance to us all, and himself too; his high spirit and animosity has incouraged him to make

the first Onset; and what quarter can he expect from either Enemy or Friend, who aspersés both, and tells them to their faces he scornes them? Certainly, mighty is the Mans Courage, who dares attempt these things; great his prowesse; invincible his valour; to give you one proof of his Magnanimity for all; do but reflect upon, and well consider the grand *Action*, or rather *Passion* of His life, and tell me who more daring, more potent, more venturous than He, who in the twinkling of an Eye, *Præto*, while a man could say *What's this? run his head thorow an Inch-thick board.*

Often have I made it matter of admiration, when I have seen an abusive Copy of Verses (that have been but the product of a *green brain.*) of a Malapert Youngster against his Schoolmaster, in revenge of that severity which his own folly justly merited: My wonder has been more increast, when I have red a Libel penn'd against a Country Justice of the Peace, by an oppress'd or sportive Gentleman: but for a *Man*, *an old Man*, *a Lawyer*, *A Bencher of Lincolns Inne*, about the period of his dayes to raile at all *Authority*, all kinds of Government, to make himself diametrically opposite to whatsoever is called the *Present power*, in good earnest I think there are more wonderers at it than any single self. Against *Kings*, against *Liturgie*, against *Bishops*, against those that are against *Kings*, *Liturgie*, and *Bishops*; *pro* and *con*, *con* and *pro*, *for*, and *against*. I lately perus'd a Paper, the title whereof was this, *The Names of the Lords of the Other House:* having read it over, and over again, I was somewhat troubled at his late Highnesse's oversight or forgetfulnesse, in leaving out this Gentleman's name, for (without all peradventure) [*THE LORD PRYNNE*] would have sounded very emphatically, and *He* would have quitted himself in the discharge of that function very worthily, which consists (as I am inform'd) altogether *in exercising a Negative voice over all the good People of this Nation*, which I'me sure he would have done from the *highest* to the *lowest*. *Negatives* are indeed a good *Periphrasis* for the Deity; yet very dangerous (as I conceive) for any *man* to appropriate to himself, or make a Monopoly on; especially a *Man* that never was a *Lord* in this World, nor ever is like to be one.

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This is the *Man*, the *error* of whose Judgement, and impardonable *instability* is to be imputed to the losse of his two *Biasses*; for if a *Bowle*'s deviation from the *Jack* is occasioned hereby, much more a rational Creature's *à fortiori*. This is the *William*, whose passion is the *Conquerour* (as *Cleaveland* sayes in another case,) *This* is the eminent Wit of all *London*, abating onely one Creek, which they call *Billingsgate*; *there* indeed is a nursery almost as *eloquently* gifted as himself.

But, among all the scurrilities, and absurdities he is guilty of, I am most of all offended at two things, which constantly, duely, and inseparably accompany *his* writings, 1. His Monstrous *Title-Pages*, and 2ly. *His* abhominable frightfull Margent: As to the first of these; Any Man now-a-dayes who but sees a single sheet in *Quarto* on a Booksellers stall (be it but *in transitu*) *all-to-be-cloje-Printed* in the *Front*, he never makes further enquiry after the Author's name, but presently makes as quick, and nimble Conception of *Him*, as a beggar does of an *Alehouse*, when he spies a *Red-Latice*; or an *Whoremaster* of a *Bawdy-house*, when he sees a torn *Smock* hang out at the window. The words in the *Title-page* (poor miscreants!) how they crowd one another for elbow room! truly (in my judgement) the great Bush, (to use the old Saw) renders the wine suspicious, and may well drive the Reader upon the Poets Interrogatory,

Quid tanto dignum tulit hic promissor hiatu?
What this same Promser ha's done
To merit so much gaping on?

In generall this may be affirmed, that whoever shall trouble himself to read over all his works, titles, and all, may chance at the conclusion to meet with a fare parallel to that same good Fellow's, who walking the streets early in a morning, found a Pacquet, curiously bound up, and seal'd, but having taking the labour to open the first paper of the bundle, he finds another, and another, and a fourth, fifth, and sixt paper, till at length he found in the midd'st of all, what think you my Masters? why, even (saving your presence) a Surrevence.

Then for his Margent, or Commentaries, *Tom Farnaby* never

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ver cramm'd *Perſius* worſe than he loads himſelfe, Quotations, Statutes, figures, &c. which a man had better believe to be all as he ſays, than turn over ſo many volumes to diſprove him: In a word, I am almoſt ſo fooliſh as to approve of *his* two conceits who reſembled *His Text, and Comment,* to a *Calve's head* and *Pourtenance*; or an *Owle* encircled with a multitude of little *Birds.*

But I beſeech you Sirs! why *Mr. Prinne* no *Parliament man* this bout? why muſt he reply with *Bacon's Brazen nodle, TIME WAS*? why an excluded member? Are *they* not all *Keepers* of the *Liberty*? and does not *hee* aſſume to himſelfe as much *Liberty* as any *Freeman* in *England,* or t'other two Nations? Truly all the reaſon that I heare of for it, is that which *exalted him, January* 30. 1637. meerly his *tongue,* and *pen,* the turbulencies of his language, and abuſe of his *excellent* parts. The maintaining of a *Paradox* has been counted of old the gallantry of great Wits; but then, theſe *Paradoxes* were ſo qualified, that their Author's Judgement might plainly appear to be clean different from what he therein argued for diſcourſe ſake. Certainly no man can be ſo far beſotted to ſuppoſe the offspring of his invention (produc'd at firſt probably out of a frolique) to be in good ſober ſadneſſe a truth, a reality to be adhæred unto, admir'd, ador'd, that a man ought to prize it beyond *fleſh and blood*: I am ſo charitable to believe *His* firſt Eſſay, in this nature, was intended only for an experiment of *His* Parts, and Sophriſtry, however it comes to paſſe now that *hee* ſeems to make that his *Faith,* which was but once at beſt, *Opinion*: with the Melancholy Nobleman's Son who once acted the Beggar's part in a Comœdy, and ever after perſwaded himſelf to be in his whole life, what he had perſonated on the Stage for one hour. And now what better recreation in the intervals over a pot of ale, ſport than to hear Mr. *Prinn's Republicans*? what better ſport than to heare Mr. *Needham's* Emiſſaries to cry through the noſe, Mr. *William Prynn's Good Old Cauſe rightly ſtated, and the bad uncaſed,* &c. All this while, the whole ſeries of all his deſigns aiming at Authority, and the Pilots that ſit at the Helm of State. But what are they that bark at the Moon? The buſineſſe fly makes many attempt upon the

the candle, till at last his singed wings compel him to an inglorious retreat. The filth which a man spits at Heaven, commonly lights on his own pate.

Mr. *Camden* tells a story concerning the antient *Britons*, that at their first plantation in *Armorica*, being forc'd to take wives of that Country, they were no sooner married but they cut their wives *Tongues* out, to the end (sayes he) that their Children might not learn that Country language from their Mothers. A stratagem truly, very commendable: I am not so cruel to wish the like doom to our Lawyer, because 'tis his most necessary implement; but I could wish it restrain'd, and bridled, to prevent hazard of our Childrens becomming as bad as *Shimei's* as Himself.

A word or two in the *Quakers* tone; *Willian Prynne*, cease thy Scribling; Plague not the Presse with rallery any more; Obey the Magistrate; Murther not the Law; Maim not the *Gospell*; Cease to speak ill of the Powers above thee; Leave off thy revilling, evil speaking, thy factious, seditious spirit; Be humble, be lowly, left a worse thing betide thee.

To conclude; I wish him a through conviction of his infirmities, and such a one as may render them as odious to himself, as they are to all the World, of sober, moderate men. I wish him Repentance, and if he be incapable of that, I wish him *once again a Pasteboard Bongrace*, to protect his beauty from tanning by the Sun-beams, when the State shall think fit, once againe to expose him in *excelso* to the view of the World.

FINIS.